

HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATIONS

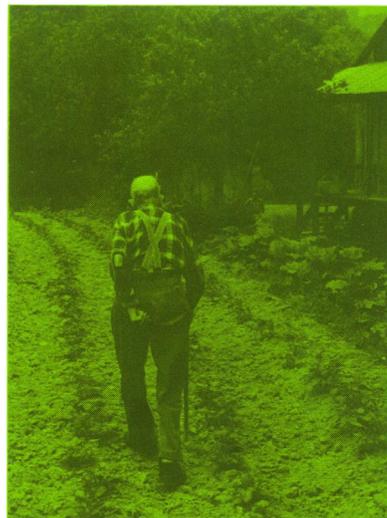
The HMO concept represents a highly promising way to heighten the effectiveness of the national health enterprise. Reduced to its simplest terms, the HMO has two essential aspects. It brings together in a single organization a comprehensive range of medical services, including health maintenance and preventive care, so that a participating patient is assured of access to the service he needs. Second, it provides these services for a fixed contract fee, paid in advance by those who participate.

It is not a revolutionary concept; a number of organizations fulfilling these basic conditions already exist and are providing care to several million Americans. But its promulgation across the country would represent the kind of reorientation of medical care resources and the kind of benefits in accessibility and quality of care to which HSMHA as an agency is dedicated.

The Health Services and Mental Health Administration has been given a leadership role in technical assistance for HMO development in line with our basic mission. Several of our programs plus our regional office staffs are helping to carry out important parts of this task. Nearly all of our programs are involved directly or indirectly. The local services they help to support will in many cases be closely related to HMO development, and in some instances will become the nucleus for such a program. The HMO can well evolve into a primary unifying force for grant programs in health.

VERNON E. WILSON, M.D.
Administrator
HSMHA

Cover—To solve the exceedingly diverse problems of poverty in rural America, the establishment of a national rural center is proposed in the story on page 511. Photo by Arthur Tress, New York City.

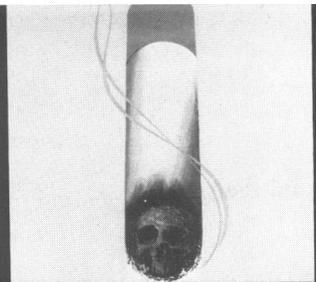


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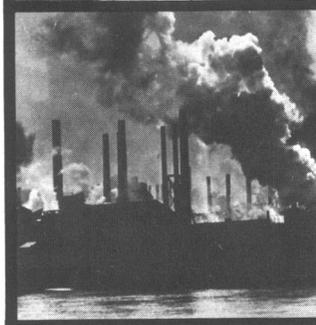
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